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## EAST AFRICA

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# EAST AFRICA

ELSPETH HUXLEY

*With  
twelve plates in colour  
and seventeen illustrations in  
black and white*



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## CHAPTER I

TAKE a dozen Englishmen and ask them—"What is England like?"—and you will get a dozen answers. One will tell you of long grimy streets with box-like houses under the shadow of the pithead winding gear, and men with blackened faces cycling home through a fine rain from the morning shift; another of a thick-walled farm-house at the end of a rutted lane, a muddy yard, and the smell of cow-dung and hay. A third will remember velvet lawns and tall yew hedges tended for centuries by many gardeners, the long speckless passages of a great house, and a concourse of hounds, horses and red-coated riders moving off from the yard of the village inn on a sharp December morning, while the next will speak of a raw wind as sharp as razors sweeping across the North Sea to bite through oilskins and jerseys, the stench of gutted fish, and hands torn and bleeding from the pull of ice-coated ropes. England is forty million different things to forty million different people, you cannot describe it in a page, or a chapter, or in a dozen volumes.

How, then, can you describe a great slice of Africa? A group of four separate countries, with twelve million inhabitants, and covering an area larger than the British Isles, France, Spain and Italy combined?

Africa's variety is no less than Britain's—its extremes are greater. Ask your questions, and you will get answers as diverse. Let us say that you station yourself at a busy corner in one of the East Coast ports—Mombasa, perhaps, the gateway into Kenya and Uganda, or Dar-es-Salaam, the capital as well as the harbour of Tanganyika—and accost the first half-dozen passers-by who take your fancy. First comes a bearded Arab, dressed in the long white cotton robe traditional to his race—the *kanzu*, with a brocaded waistcoat and a red sash round the middle. His dark face wears an arrogant look, even though all cause for arrogance, Arab dominion and Arab wealth, has crumbled, and his manner, courteous and reserved, bears the stamp of an aristocrat's tradition. He would speak, if you could persuade him to talk freely, of a cool white bungalow, brilliant under the hard sunshine, in the dusty street of a coastal town now half-decayed, and of coconut plantations dense with weeds, neglected, the nuts ungathered, once tended by his family's slaves but now yielding to the encroaching jungle.

Perhaps he would speak of the glories of the past, when all the East African littoral, from Mogadishu to Mozambique, was a part of the domains of the Sultan of Muscat, when fleets of dhows put into the busy harbours with the north-east monsoon and returned, when the wind changed to the south-west, laden with slaves and ivory and the produce of the colonial plantations. His ancestors, he would tell you, were men of importance then, and of wealth too. The coast was theirs, and the big houses, slaves waited on them, caught them fish in the warm sea and grew rice and oranges on land cleared of bush and jungle. Their robes were of velvet and silk and gold thread, with silver-mounted daggers thrust into their sashes. Rich carpets were strewn on the floors, the doors of their houses were beautifully carved in local woods. Little of this remains, now, for your Arab informer, save pride and memories, falling houses and run-down plantations, a little trade, and devotion to the faith of Islam.

Your talk with the Arab may make you sad, as remnants of a broken power are apt to do, even though you would remember that the cruelty and barbarism of the slave trade lay at the core of Arab ascendancy. You might choose to speak next to a man of the race that superseded the Arabs—to the present rather than the past. A clean-shaven, alert-looking young Englishman, walking down the street with the assurance of a ruler, clad in newly laundered and uncreased white ducks and a white topee shining like a daisy in a sunlit field, black tie trimly in position—you could not take him for anyone but an officer of the Administration. He would radiate confidence in the mission of his race to civilise and remould the African—confidence in his own training and ability, in the potentialities of the African peoples, in the ideals informing his government's actions.

And what of the Africa that he knows? He sees more of it than most, for an inscrutable government is constantly moving him about from one district and province to another. To him it is a succession of stuffy bungalows with corrugated iron roofs, and wooden verandahs where the nightly ceremony of short drinks is held. It is mornings spent in even stuffier offices half submerged under files and reports and circulars from the Secretariat, or passed in native court-houses listening to interminable lawsuits about goats or thefts or unsatisfactory wives, amid the heavy smell of native bodies. It is afternoons spent in checking accounts while thundery heat wrings sweat from the body, evenings on the station tennis court, or perhaps its nine-hole golf course, and later, now and again, a game of bridge with the doctor and his wife and the young cadet.

But most of all it is his periodic *safari* round the district he administers, his car piled high with baggage and equipment, to hear complaints and explain new moves in government policy and inspect the records of the native courts. It is moonlit nights in lonely camps, with the bush crowding close, and the noise of crickets and frogs and hyenas, perhaps mingled with wild and distant native song in a symphony at once monotonous and exciting. It is



NATIVE GIRL FROM TANGANYIKA

Oil painting by Johann Sitje

*By courtesy of the author*



A YOUNG KIKUYU GIRL  
Bronze head by Dora Clarke

*By courtesy of Dr. Julian Huxley*

the ever-fresh beauty of early morning when the sun, still young and gentle, chases dew from grassblades and from cobwebs that tremble over the spiky bush; hot days of jolting along treacherous tracks with a cloud of dust billowing out from under the wheels; cool peaceful evenings when guinea-fowl and francolin call deceptively from the gullies. And above all, perhaps, it is faces of native personalities that return to the mind—faces that laugh and are friendly, that conceal guile and perhaps greed, laziness and often obstinacy, but that belong to men who have been loyal friends, wise chiefs, resourceful and cheerful servants, and sometimes brave allies in times of danger and distress.

Africa is all these things to the white official, but there is one thing that it is not. It is seldom home. He is a man of divided loyalties, looking back and looking forward to the first and the last periods of his life spent in another continent, and with other ties. This is where he differs most from the settler, the European who has come to Africa to make his home, as a white African to live and die.

The next man whom you may choose to address comes also from another continent, but he was born in East Africa, and in East Africa he expects to die. He is an Indian, perhaps a Hindu from Bombay. Although he has never seen Bombay he can name his relations there, he sends them money, and for him the Indian Ocean is not a barrier but a lake dividing one branch of his family from another. His face is plump and round and dark-brown, his nature peaceful, and his mind—outside the cares of his religion and his wives and numerous children—is wholly devoted to the interests of trade. East Africa, for him, is a place where maize and millet, hides and skins and ghee, can be bought cheaply from the growers, and where a never-drying stream of black customers trickles past his wood-and-iron *duka* to finger, discuss, and eventually to buy brightly coloured blankets, yards of unbleached cotton *amerikani*, felt hats, football stockings, paraffin lamps, even bicycles and greatcoats, and all the hundred and one items so enticingly displayed. To him the geography of Africa is not a matter of roads and mountains and rivers, it is a sort of trading chart. At this place lives a cousin who buys native maize, at that his wife's nephew who deals in hides, at the other an uncle to whom he sends ornaments, mirrors and mugs and receives in return loads of sorghum and twists of tobacco.

You have not spoken yet with the black-skinned men, who have wandered and cultivated and fought over this side of Africa for so much longer than Arabs or Indians or Europeans. It is difficult to know where to start, there are so many of them. They crowd the street, men and women of so many types and callings. A few are still to be seen in backwoods dress, the men in skins or blankets, the women in cloaks and skirts of dressed ochre-red goatskins, but these are rare, and look uncouth and bewildered. Some have reached the other end of the scale, and strut resplendent in well-pressed suits of European cut, white topees, and shiny leather shoes. The majority fall somewhere between these two extremes. They go about in khaki shorts or trousers and

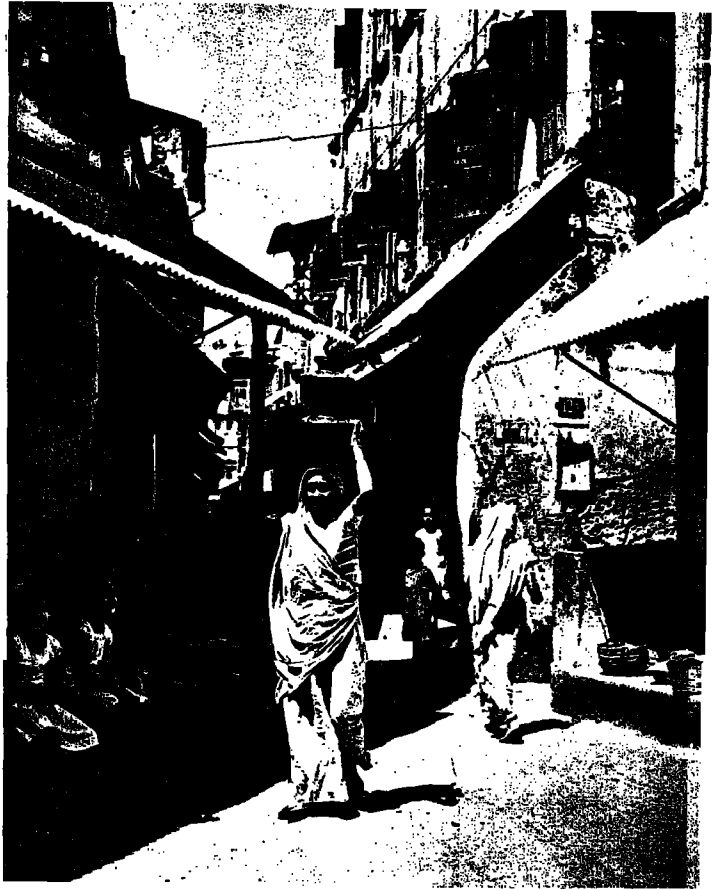
coloured cotton shirts, with old felt hats and bare feet or sandals. To this class belongs the man you next select for cross-examination—a hulking stalwart with short woolly hair and broad Negro features, and teeth of amazing whiteness. A dock labourer, you discover, working on a six month's contract loading and unloading the cargoes of ships.

You will not find him articulate, you will have to fill in for yourself the gaps in his story. He may tell you that he comes from Kavirondo, the hot and steamy fertile belt that lies to the east of Lake Victoria, between Kisumu, once the terminus of the Kenya and Uganda Railway, and Mwanza, now the farthest point of the Tanganyika system. The homestead to which he will soon return is a group of round thatched huts encircled by a thorn-bush palisade. At night goats huddle together in a pen beside his bed. By day he is accustomed to go out to the *shamba*, the gardens, wielding a pick to turn fresh earth, or else to help his younger brothers with the herding of goats, or to stroll through the morning heat to the market and spend a pleasant day haggling and gossiping beneath the trees. Now he would feel ashamed without his khaki shorts and his cotton shirt, but as a child he ran about stark naked, and when his father was a young man no clothing but beads was correct. Perhaps when he is sweating at the docks, loading bales of raw cotton or sacks of simsim that his brothers may have grown, the cool rich green of the banana plantations of Kavirondo, the brilliant green of the canes, the sparkle of streams hurrying through tangled undergrowth, may spring before his eyes, and he may feel homesick for the leisured easy life of his native swamps and hillsides.

No contrast between men of the different nations of Europe could be greater than the contrast between, let us say, your Kavirondo and the next person you question—a tall, turbaned Somali from the north. Where the one has a broad face with thick rubbery lips, coarse bones, and a ready smile, the other has thin aquiline features, slim wrists and hips and ankles, a coppery complexion. He will be polite, but frigid and reserved; a Moslem, cherishing the traditional Moslem contempt for Christians. He will not tell you much, save perhaps that he trades in cattle or sheep in the north, among barbarian nomadic tribes, driving the cattle down (when quarantine restrictions do not prevent him) to trade with Masai or with Europeans in southern districts. Cattle trading of late has been made more and more difficult, so perhaps he deals in hides or in the brown hairy native sheep. His Africa is a desolate country of vast open plains, parched and baked in the dry seasons to a dusty dun-coloured waste punctuated by scattered water-holes. Here, or along sandy water-courses, are the bunch-topped dom palms and perhaps acacias; elsewhere no trees save the lonely stunted thorn-scrub. After the rains these deserts enjoy a brief glory. Green grass springs up miraculously, and almost overnight; wildflowers suddenly star the smiling pastures. Then the cattle which somehow scrape a living on the desert's fringes pack a little flesh on to their staring bones, and the herdsmen, stalking in their wake with no possessions save a spear and a short skin cloak, find them more lively and intractable

than before. The Somali's memories are of long hours spent in driving hard bargains; of slow journeys herding cattle and sheep before him; of nights spent rolled in a blanket by campfires with lions prowling close at hand, and of others among friends in the Somali village built of petrol tins to be found on the outskirts of most East African towns. But the rewards are worth it, for the Somali belongs to an avaricious race: a steadily growing hoard of wealth banked in the form of cattle, on some distant pasture; a wife, perhaps two wives, often unvisited for a year or more; a few gaily coloured turbans and rugs; and, as a spice in the pudding, the thrill of matching wits with other men's, and of getting the best of a bargain.

And so you might continue: talking to men of a hundred different tribes, and getting a hundred different pictures of the African scene. And even if you spoke to all the people in Mombasa or Dar-es-Salaam, you would not get the whole story. You would not be likely to find there a Doro hunter, with his bow and poisoned arrows and his knowledge of the ways of wild animals; or a Kipsigis sorcerer, with his secret lore and his spells and his power over simpler tribesmen, or a Masai warrior with his tossing pigtailed lion-maned head-dress and his fondness for milk curdled with cow's urine and blood. To see these and other peoples, and the country in which they dwell, you must leave the shores of the Indian Ocean and travel inland, to the shores of Lake Tanganyika and the forests of the Mountains of the Moon.



AN INDIAN WOMAN IN A NARROW STREET  
Zanzibar



After the Arabs came the Portuguese In every school-book the story is told of how Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1497, found the sun on his right hand, and sailed up the African coast the first European so far as we know, to set eyes on those Arab settlements since the days of the Roman Empire

Vasco da Gama found the Arabs friendly He was received by the Sheikh of Mozambique, touched at Kilwa and Mombasa, and at Malindi entered on a pact of peace and friendship with the ruler, who presented him with "two coloured silk rugs with gold fringes and a ring with a blue stone very pretty to look at" But the Arabs' friendliness did not save them Five years later da Gama returned and forced the Sultan of Kilwa to acknowledge the King of Portugal, and in 1505 Almeida, with a fleet of twenty ships and fifteen hundred men, occupied the town Mombasa fell after bloody street-fighting, and suffered the first of many sackings, so thorough that at the end of it there was "no living thing in it, neither man nor woman, young or old, no child, however little, all who failed to make their escape had been killed or burnt" In ten years the conquest of the coast was complete

In the south the Portuguese established a stronghold at Mozambique, and their rule continues until the present day In the north it lasted for less than two hundred years It was always a loose control, exercised by small and fever-ridden garrisons and reinforced by uneasy agreements with the ruling Arab families To-day the principal reminders of the Portuguese period are the stout honey-coloured walls of Fort Jesus which rise over Mombasa town If ghosts walk, here is their terrain, it would be hard to find a square of stone and mortar where greater human agony has been endured Begun in 1593 in order to establish a Portuguese strong point against the threat of Turkish invasion, it has seen many massacres, murders, and dreadful sieges After its fall in 1698, the Portuguese never recovered their hold on the coast north of the Rovuma, and the Arabs came back into their own

But the power of Oman had passed its prime It was weakened at the heart, in South Arabia, and the towns along the East African coast became independent of the centre and of each other Zanzibar remained the most prosperous and the most loyal of the Arab settlements, and hither, in 1840, Said-bin-Sultan, the ruler of Oman, transferred his court and his seat of administration

The island of Zanzibar then became the focus of trade and travel for the East African coast Here came the slaves, brought from the interior by caravans which wound their slow way along the old-established routes down which the Arabs had always drawn their wealth Here came the ivory, bought from native hunters with a coin of cloth and beads And here, too, came the white explorers, bent on laying bare the secrets of the continent and filling in, for the first time in history, the blank spaces on the maps

Zanzibar is a small green island that smells of cloves a delicious smell, one which lingers everywhere as a sort of permanent olfactory background This is



PICKERS SEPARATING THE DAY'S HARVEST OF CLOVES FROM THE STEMS  
Zanzibar

a recent characteristic of the island, for cloves were only introduced in the last century—smuggled in, somehow or other, from Mauritius or Reunion, where they had in turn been illicitly introduced from their home in the “spice isles,” the Moluccas in the East Indies. It was Said-bin-Sultan who fostered, indeed created, the clove industries of Zanzibar and Pemba, which to-day produce four-fifths of the world's supply. The town of Zanzibar is a place of narrow winding streets between high-walled houses, densely packed with humanity of every colour and race. There are Swahilis who look like Negroes and Swahilis who look like Moors; natives from the mainland; and a swarm of Indian traders, waiting like spiders in their open-fronted shops and sometimes darting forth to fasten on a likely client. To-day the town has a run-down, decaying look which is in keeping with the facts of the case, since it is now the capital of a little-known island off the east coast of Africa and no longer the centre of an Arabian empire. The glory of Zanzibar belongs to the past; it is to be seen in the old Arab houses, in the magnificent carved doors, in the brass-studded chests which are the most prized antiques of the island.

A descendant of the rulers of Muscat still sits on the throne, but power has slipped from his hands. The process was a slow one, starting with a steady British pressure on the Sultan to put down the traffic in slaves. For half a century British interest in Zanzibar began and ended with a determination to abolish this trade in the Indian Ocean, as had already been done elsewhere. The process had to be gradual, since the whole Arab economy was based on

slavery as an institution. The quick way would have been to seize the Sultan's dominions, as Britain could so easily, and at any time, have done. But she did not. By a series of agreements, scrupulously carried out on both sides, the slave trade was limited and finally destroyed. But in destroying it, the power of the Arabs was broken too.

The history of the interior, so far as we know it, begins a thousand years later than that of the coast. It does not start with any certainty until a group of great Victorians—Livingstone and Speke, Joseph Thomson, Burton, Baker and Grant—undertook their perilous and exciting explorations in the latter half of the last century. Before that, East Africa was a turmoil of migrating and warring races. First, it is believed, came the Negroes, perhaps from India, pouring southwards and exterminating, or at any rate overwhelming, the indigenous people already in possession. Little is known of these earlier Africans, save that they lived in pit-dwellings, and practised agriculture, and had carved stone and wooden vessels of a higher artistic conception than anything their conquerors achieved. Relics of them survived, it is thought, until fairly recent times. The Kikuyu, for instance, have many legends about an earlier race they call the Agumba, "the people of the children's eyes": dwarfish folk who lived in the forests on game they trapped or shot with poisoned arrows, and on wild honey. The last survivors, they say, turned into plantain-birds, and their spirits can be heard to-day calling among the trees. But the Negroes had iron, and the pit-dwellers had not. Superiority of arms gave victory to the invaders.

In the main the Negro flood, flowing up the Nile valley, turned westwards, and came to rest on the Atlantic's shores. East African tribes, on the whole, have little Negro blood, and some have none at all. They were formed from later waves of Hamitic peoples, bronze-skinned men also from Asia, who intermarried with tribes they conquered on their way. East Africa is, in fact, a vast hodge-podge of races, ranging from people of almost pure Hamitic stock, light-skinned and nomadic, to black, thick-lipped tribes with a strong admixture of the Negro.

To-day much of Africa belongs to the Bantu—a vast congerie of tribes who speak many dialects of the same language group, the Bantu tongue, with its system of word roots modified by suffixes and prefixes. The Swahili language is of the Bantu group, and that is why it has found such ready acceptance throughout eastern Africa. The Bantu-speaking people extend roughly from the Tana river in the north to the Orange in the south. They are of mixed Negro and Hamitic stock. Though split into a thousand separate tribes, some warlike and some peaceful, some weak and some strong, some cattle-owning and some agricultural, the essentials of their tribal organisation, of their religious beliefs, and of their social structure are very much the same. Black in complexion, woolly haired, sturdily built; cheerful yet superstitious, brave yet indolent, shrewd yet ignorant, prolific yet disease-ridden, pliable in nature yet with deep-rooted obstinacies—they, it is scarcely possible to

doubt, are the inheritors of Africa's future. And just as their past is a puzzle to all observers—why, alone among the great races of mankind, did they stand still in the race of progress building no permanent houses, finding no means to improve their soil, learning no science, evolving no industries, above all inventing no form of written word and creating no worthy form of art?—so is their future an enigma at whose solution no wise man would care to guess.

No doubt one reason for their stagnation was their isolation from the outside world. In the history of the world, rivers and narrow land-locked seas have played a tremendous part. It was always infinitely easier to travel by water than by road, if you had only your feet, and perhaps horses or oxen, to carry you on land. But the rivers of East Africa have been no help at all. A number of them flow from the central highlands to the sea—the Juba, the Tana, the Pangani, the Rufiji, and the Rovuma—but boats cannot sail far upstream. And behind the fertile but narrow coastal belt lies a vast stretch of hostile, dry and unhealthy country which acted, for thousands of years, as a barrier between the inland natives and the sea. On the north, an utterly barren and waterless desert, on the south an expanse of cruel and tsetse-ridden bush, and on the west the dense forests of the Congo, barred other approaches. The people of east central Africa were living as it were on an island, but one surrounded by hostile country and not by navigable sea.

And so the first explorers came not in ships but in caravans—strings of sweating porters with loads on their heads, loads of medicines and tents and ammunition, but most of all of trade goods to exchange with the natives for food. Beads, cloth and wire were standard currency. This tale of explorations begins with Johann Rebmann and Johann Ludwig Krapf, Germans employed by the Church Missionary Society of London (Krapf was described by the Sultan of Zanzibar as "good man who wishes to convert the world to God"), the first Europeans to set eyes on the snow-capped mountains of Kilimanjaro and Kenya. Krapf visited Kilimanjaro in 1848. The beauty and fertility of what he called the "East African alpine land" delighted him, as it has delighted every visitor since—deep cool forests below the glaciers, pure tinkling streams, steep red ridges planted with maize, bananas, sugar-cane and millet, brilliant-plumaged birds, and the clear sparkling air. "It will be a noble land," he wrote, "when Christian culture shall hallow it."

Ten years later, Richard Burton and John Speke, officers of the Indian Army, followed the Arab slave-trade route inland from the coast opposite Zanzibar in search of the "sea of Ujiji," and became the first white men to set eyes on Lake Tanganyika. Speke, travelling on alone, in that same year sighted the shores of Lake Victoria—the greatest lake in Africa, a sheet of water the size of Ireland, around whose perimeter the densest population of East Africa dwells. Returning to the lake with a fellow-officer named Grant, Speke made his way up the western shore and, in 1862, stood at the spot where the White Nile issues from Victoria Nyanza and starts its long journey down to the valley of Egypt and the Mediterranean sea.

During his search Speke entered, as the first white man to do so, the strange kingdom of Buganda—strange, because it was so much more developed politically than the savage areas to the eastwards, where predatory nomads roamed the plains, or painted warriors ambushed the traveller with poisoned arrows. In Buganda the people acknowledged the rule of an autocratic king, descendant of a ruling race of Hamitic folk who conquered and thereafter ruled the agricultural people they found near the Lake. Here in Buganda were towns and roads and well-regulated markets. The supreme head of the state was the king, but assisting him was a chief adviser—a sort of prime minister—and a properly constituted council, which met at the capital, Kampala, to discuss and amend laws and policies. The kingdom was divided into a number of counties, and over each county was a chief, himself an autocratic ruler and a large landowner. The organisation of the Kingdom was preserved intact under the Uganda Agreement of 1900 between the king and the British Government. The structure of native law and order, although it has been developed in some directions and limited in others, is still essentially the same. Buganda, in fact, has provided one of the first and one of the most successful examples of the British policy of indirect rule in Africa.

The brave and hardy company of explorers who drew the map of east central Africa between 1860 and the turn of the century followed, at first, the same road inland from the coast—the old trade route that took off at Bagamoyo, opposite Zanzibar, and ran through Tabora to Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika. It was an old route, an historic route, going back through many centuries, and trodden by the feet of unnumbered slaves. Along this route travelled H. M. Stanley to keep his famous rendezvous with David Livingstone under the mango tree at Ujiji in 1871. But farther north, the savage reputation of the Masai tribe barred the way across the steppes and uplands lying beyond the belt of waterless thorn scrub behind the coastal strip. These nomads had for many years terrorised the surrounding and more peaceful tribes by their periodic raids in quest of cattle. They maintained, in effect, a standing army. The young men, the *morani*, lived apart from their families, in large huts which were the equivalent of barracks. They ate only meat and a concoction of curdled blood and whey. Forbidden to marry or to touch fermented drinks, they were trained only for war. A company of *morani* on the march must have been a terrifying sight. They were naked save for a very short leather cloak which dangled from one shoulder to the waist, and their bronze skins were smeared with a mixture of sheep's fat and red ochre. They wore their hair in a large number of dangling plaits, stiffened with fat and with cattle's hair, and when fighting they often added to their height—already considerable—by wearing a tall head-dress made of lion's mane. They were brave and supremely arrogant, and bore themselves with the swagger of bullies.

It was not until 1883 that the first European, a 25-year-old Scot called Joseph Thomson, traversed their country. The story of his expedition from Mombasa, through the thorny scrub to the Masai steppes, across those to the

foothills of Mount Kenya, and finally to the Lake Victoria basin, is a thrilling tale of adventure. (Joseph Thomson's own account of it, *Through Masailand*, is a classic among books on Africa.) He did not believe that he could have got through alive had he not posed as a great medicine-man, a fact which he repeatedly demonstrated by removing and replacing his two false teeth and by making water "boil" by the addition of Eno's Fruit Salts. This won him a grudging acceptance, but not much personal respect. Greased and naked warriors armed with spears would often force their way into his tent and demand that he take off his boots to exhibit his toes. One warrior, intrigued by the movable teeth, seized his nose and tugged at it



DR. DAVID LIVINGSTONE  
Engraving by Alonzo Chappel, 1867

vigorously to see if it would come off too. But he kept his temper and his head. He was the first European to cross the range of mountains which he named the Aberdares, after the president of the Royal Geographical Society. He travelled over the great plateau above the Rift Valley, on its south-east side, giving his own name to a waterfall of great beauty now the centre of a district of Kenya. Where he descended the escarpment into the valley he discovered Lake Baringo; climbing up the other side, he went on to Mount Elgon, which he also named, and thence to the northern waters of the Lake. He had opened a new way into Central Africa. Ten years later it had become a well-worn trade route, traversed by long caravans of porters carrying on their heads stores and cotton cloth and provisions for the scattered white men, who were endeavouring to "open up" the interior.

With Joseph Thomson the era of great explorers ended, and the era of political jockeying began. The first Europeans who went to East Africa to live were missionaries, of both Protestant and Roman Catholic persuasions. After

the missionaries came the traders, exchanging beads and cloth for ivory and grain. And, finally, the Government. The record of the British in East Africa is one of imperialism of the most reluctant and unwilling kind. In 1878 they refused to sanction a concession pressed by the Sultan of Zanzibar upon a Scotsman called Sir William Mackinnon, the chairman of a shipping line plying to India, offering him a lease and a free hand over the whole mainland from the Juba to the Rovuma rivers. Territory in Africa was the last thing the British Government wanted. With great difficulty Sir William Mackinnon won official recognition and a royal charter for the Imperial British East Africa Company ten years later. When the Company got into difficulties, as it very soon did—the expenses of keeping open the road to Uganda and of maintaining law and order in the interior were out of all proportion to the meagre returns—the British Government refused point-blank to take over its responsibilities. Uganda and all the territory that lay between Lake Victoria and the coast were very nearly abandoned. But the Church Missionary Society, reluctant to close down its stations, aroused just enough public opinion to turn the scale, helped by a propaganda campaign waged by a tenacious young army officer called Captain Lugard, who had been sent up to Uganda with a small force by the Company to keep order. Perhaps the decisive factor was the acquisitive spirit suddenly displayed by the Germans. These three factors were just enough to turn the scale. In 1893 the Union Jack was hoisted at Kampala, and Uganda was declared a British Protectorate.

The first and greatest British enterprise was to construct a railway from the coast to Lake Victoria—a line 800 miles long. It was a difficult and expensive railway to build, and its story is in itself a little epic. Waterless deserts, man-eating lions who preyed on and terrorised the Indians imported to lay the rails, fever and sickness, the scaling of mountains, the spanning of valleys, the bridging of rivers that turned into swollen torrents in the rains—all these, and many more obstacles, had to be overcome. Natives stole steel rails, termites ate wooden sleepers, floods swept away embankments, rhinoceroses derailed locomotives, sunstroke prostrated engineers, every sort of trouble had to be faced. But all were conquered, and in 1901, four years after it was started, the Uganda Railway reached its terminus at Kisumu, on the shores of the Lake.

The money had come from the British Treasury, and soon the annual loss on the running of the railway began to cause irritation. Goods might be carried in, but there was little to take out. The natives grew sufficient crops only for their own support. There was nothing over for export. And there was then no mineral wealth, nothing to be “exploited.” It was a dilemma, and only one way out could be found. Sir Charles Eliot, first Commissioner of the British East Africa Protectorate (which was taken over from the Chartered Company by the British Government in 1895), pointed out that after the railway’s first 300 barren miles, it entered a region where much of the soil was fertile, the altitude high, the climate healthy, and yet where the native population was sparse. Over large areas, in fact, there were no native

settlements at all. It was a splendid place for British farmers to take up land and live, producing crops for the railway to carry away and founding a new outpost of the British Empire at the same time.

Already a few adventurous Englishmen and South Africans had reached the country, looked at the uncultivated highland soil with interest, and applied for grants of land. In 1902, it became the official policy to attract and encourage settlers. Land was leased to the pioneers on easy terms, for there was all to be done—the clearing of forest or bush, the ploughing of virgin soil, the testing of new crops, the fighting of pests and diseases. Settlers began to arrive in a steady stream, bringing with them wagons and ploughs, pedigree sheep and cattle, the seeds of new crops, and a resolve to make their homes on African soil. They were the pioneers of the “white highlands” the upland core of Kenya, which the European settlers have developed and where they now dwell.

The Germans, meanwhile, had taken possession in the south. In 1884, Karl Peters founded the Society for German Colonisation, and in the same year he and three colleagues, disguised as mechanics, landed in Zanzibar and set out secretly for the interior, which was then part of the domains of the Sultan of Zanzibar. The following year they returned to Germany, still without the Sultan's knowledge, with six “treaties” made between themselves and native chiefs. The terms of the “treaties” were ambiguous, and it is doubtful whether the chiefs regarded them as anything more binding than guarantees of safe passage. Peters, however, succeeded in arousing the interest of his Government, and the territory “ceded” by the chiefs was proclaimed in Berlin to be under German protection. As soon as the Sultan of Zanzibar got wind of this he wired a protest to the German Emperor, saying “These territories belong to us and the chiefs who offer to surrender rights of sovereignty to the agents of the company are not empowered to do so, these places have belonged to us since the time of our fathers.” His protests were useless. The British Government was not prepared to support him, and in 1886 the London Agreement was signed, apportioning East Africa into “spheres of influence” dominated by Germany, Britain and the Sultan of Zanzibar.

Germany's brief period of colonial rule began and ended in bloodshed. She had to fight the Arabs before the German flag was planted along the coast. Headquarters were established at Dar-es-Salaam, meaning “haven of peace,” a small port which had been founded by the Sultan in 1862. Pacification of the tribes of the interior was effected by the sword, or rather by the rifle, and the Germans had to deal with several risings. The most serious was fomented by medicine-men who issued to the natives a magical mixture of water, maize and sorghum seed which (they claimed) caused the bullets of the Europeans to turn to water. Thousands believed this implicitly, and with cries of “Maji, maji!” (water—water) hurled themselves against German-trained troops armed with rifles. About 120,000 people perished before the rising was put down.

The German-built railway linking Dar-es-Salaam to Lake Tanganyika,





A YOUNG MASAI WARRIOR—THE OLD AFRICA  
Kenya

following the line of the old Arab slave route, was completed two months before the outbreak of the 1914-18 War. The story of the East African Campaign has often been told: how the German commander von Lettow Vorbeck, starting the war with a force of 260 Europeans and less than 5,000 native troops, at first invaded the British colony to the north and then eluded superior British forces sent to destroy him for four and a half years of war. But in 1917 he was driven over the Portuguese border, and the German colony, cleared of enemy troops, was placed under a British Administrator. In 1919 the country won from Germany was awarded under mandate from the League of Nations to Britain, to be administered in the interests of its native inhabitants and under the supervision of the Mandates Commission of the League.

So, after the 1914-18 War, all the territory between the Juba and the Rovuma rivers and between the Indian Ocean and the Great Lakes,

originally offered to Britain by the Sultan of Zanzibar and then rejected, came under British control. Each of the four separate territories was, and is, held upon different conditions and governed in somewhat different ways. One, Zanzibar, is a Protectorate whose Sultan still sits on the throne, exercising many of his ancient powers—though not the most absolute, the right to control the armed forces and to make peace or war. A British Resident advises him, and in many respects the old customs and the old social structure, with the vital exception of the institution of slavery, have been left undisturbed. Another, Uganda, is a

Protectorate also, but a more complicated one. The kingdom of Buganda survives, with its king and its premier and its parliament, and its system of counties and sub-chiefs; and the Uganda Agreement of 1900 is still its charter. But included in the Protectorate are many other little states, with less developed institutions. Uganda is really a federation of native states at different stages of development, with an element of Indian traders and white planters thrown in. Then there is Tanganyika, a Class "B" mandate held under the League of Nations, as we have seen; and finally Kenya, the only Crown Colony of the lot, which because of its white settler population and its history has developed on rather different lines from the others—more directly under British control, less as a purely native state.

This great block of Africa, over a thousand miles from north to south, and more than eight hundred across, with its twelve million blacks, provides as great a variety in climate, in plant and animal life, and in human inhabitants as you are likely to find on any comparable region of the earth.



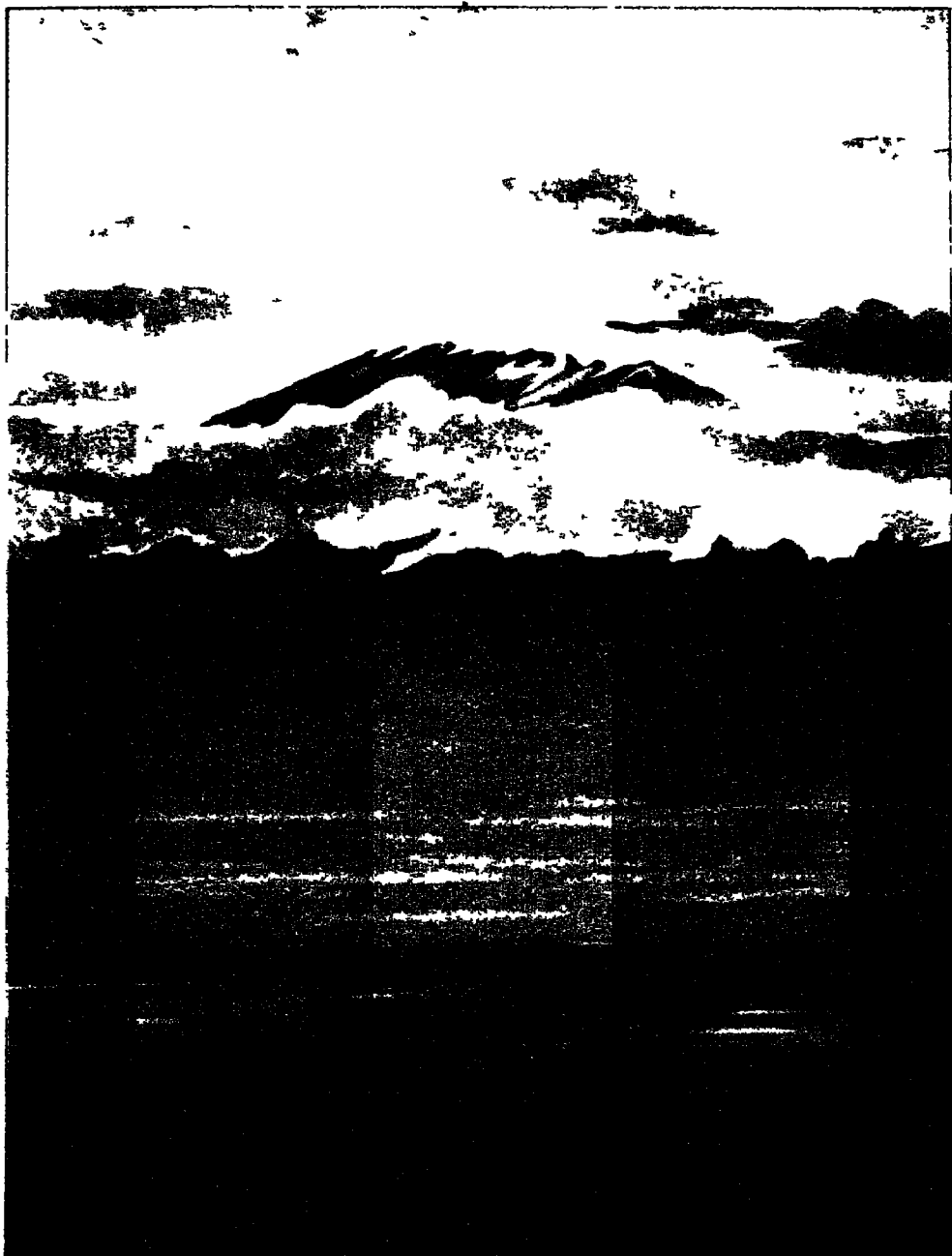
KIKUYU MAN—THE NEW AFRICA  
Kenya

## CHAPTER III

THERE are three main ways in which you may approach East Africa from Europe. (Or at least that was so until the air route was suspended when Italy entered the war.) You could come by air from the north, along the valley of the Nile, entering Uganda at its least welcoming point, where the scrub and bush of its sparsely occupied and most northerly province merge into the deserts of the Sudan. You may arrive by car from the west, coming into Uganda through its most impressive gateway and reaching a land of dramatic volcanoes, wide vistas and blue lakes, passing close to the Mountains of the Moon. Or you may come by sea, as most people have done, traversing the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, rounding Cape Gardafui, sailing south along Africa's low-lying coast-line until you reach your destination at Mombasa, Tanga or Dar-es-Salaam.

Let us assume, for the moment, that you arrive by air. At each landing-ground in the Sudan the heat will beat up at you out of the sand like the blast from a furnace door. The country beneath you will start to look a little less desolate soon after you cross the Sudan-Uganda border. The Nile becomes a ribbon of dark green, for thick grass and tall trees now grow on its banks, and elephants wander there. You will fly, most likely, directly over the Murchison Falls, where all the waters of the White Nile are compressed into a sort of funnel, and spurt with a roar and a crest of foam through a gorge narrow enough for an athlete to jump. Below these falls the river spreads out into a wide pool, and here wallow great herds of hippopotamuses—sleek, fat, complacent looking, and possessed of ungainly but undeniable charm.

On the right of the plane's course you see a great sheet of blue water, Lake Albert, and beyond it the craggy mountains of the Belgian Congo. Soon signs of life appear beneath you—cultivated patches among the bush, flocks of goats, roads with an occasional lorry moving along it. As you approach the basin of Lake Victoria, the country changes altogether. The dry bush, the scorched spaces, disappear. Quite suddenly, the land becomes tropical in appearance. It turns green all over, sliced here and there by straight



MOUNT KILIMANJARO TANGANYIKA

Water colour by Winifred Parsons

*By courtesy of the artist*



*By courtesy of the artist*

THE LONGENOTI SCARPMENI KENYA

Water colour by Winifred Parsons



LAKE ALBERT  
Uganda

red roads, boasting the best surfaces in central Africa. These are packed with people scurrying about on bicycles, and are gay with the brilliant cotton prints worn by straight-backed bare-footed women, their ebony skins sleek as satin, who move as majestically as sailboats before a fair breeze. Everywhere there are little hills with flat tops, like eroded lumps of sugar. Among the vegetation many circles are dotted about, like "fairy rings" in English fields. These are the villages, each one enclosed in its round palisade. As you approach the lake shore these become as plentiful as ticks on the flanks of an African ox. You realise, then, how empty is the country that you have flown over. If you inquire, you will find that much of it is a sleeping-sickness area, where the population has been evacuated by the Government down to the last man, woman and child. At the end of five years it is hoped that the tsetse-fly carrying the infection will have lost its evil power, and that the population will then be allowed to return.

At last you will see the waters of Africa's largest lake, stretching away out of sight. The shores are flat and torrid-looking, small boats with gaily

painted hulls, and dug-out canoes, are moving slowly about, propelled by fishermen. East and west of the air route you have been following lies the great cotton producing region of Uganda. Forty years ago no cultivated cotton grew there. In 1903 an enthusiast of the Church Missionary Society imported and distributed some bags of seed. It flourished, and the cotton industry germinated and grew with truly tropical speed. Thirty years later cotton was worth £3,000,000 annually to the Protectorate, and over 90 per cent. of the export trade consisted of this one crop. Uganda is the richest of her sister territories, with the best roads, the most schools, in some parts the highest standard of living among the natives. All this has been done on cotton, plus natural advantages of climate and soil and the existence of a population above the East African average in intelligence and trading acumen.

Between Jinja and the next stop, Kisumu, you pass over the Uganda-Kenya border. At Kisumu the time has come to proceed by car. Those who travel by road in Kenya or Tanganyika must acquire immunity to jolts, bumps, dust and breakdowns ; in the rainy season they must be ready to put on chains under water and to push cars out of mud engulfing the axles and reaching to the wheel hubs. The state of the roads is a neverfailing source of bitter complaint, but it never improves. Let us assume, however, that the rains are over, and that we set out from Kisumu on a fine morning. We shall pass for thirty or forty miles through Kavirondo country, which stretches along the whole eastern shore of the lake. Every bit of it is cultivated or grazed over by endless herds of goats, for the population is dense—in one place it even reaches 1,000 to the square mile, which is much too dense for agricultural land. For here, as in all parts of Africa, shifting cultivation is practised.

After a few crops have been taken the plot is left to rest as pasture or bush, and the cultivator moves on to clear fresh land for his garden. Kavirondo teems with life, rich and productive—cotton, sim-sim, sorghum, sugar-cane, maize, millet are the crops. The inhabitants are of many kinds : in the south a single Nilotic tribe called Luo ; in the north a congerie of many different sub-tribes, speaking different dialects but all of the Bantu group. Kavirondo men are among the strongest, physically, in East Africa, and they have the reputation of being the best workers. Yet their territory is unhealthy to Europeans—full of fever, hot and insect-ridden. You may, perhaps, pause on the summit of the Nandi escarpment to reflect that the very areas in which Africans seem most to thrive are often those least congenial to Europeans ; and that those regions which you are approaching, the cold rolling uplands, were almost empty of native settlements when the white men arrived.

You come now into a different world. You pass first through the steep green hills, now sadly deforested, of the Nandi and Lumbwa tribes, and on to a strange country to find in tropical Africa—bleak open downs, almost moorland, stretching in enormous waves to a distant horizon. Here and there, on the crests of the arrested waves or on their flanks, are patches of juniper forest, very black and solid against the green of the open downs.

The sky above seems immense, and across it roll with ponderous slowness the flat-bottomed cumulus clouds of the hot lands, shapely as the sail of a boat, and full of colour. You feel at once a world of difference in the air. It is not soft and torrid any more, but sharp and chill, and as bracing as a wind coming off the sea. Your heart lifts with the altitude, and you cannot fail to catch a sense of exhilaration and freedom from the wide country which seems to stretch away forever into the sky. Perhaps you will see a man on horseback in the distance, cantering towards some black specks on a far hillside which you guess are cattle; and it would be strange if you did not, at that instant, feel an impulse to leap on to a horse and ride after him—even if you were a person who did not ride at all. For just as the sea has always called for a boat and a sail, these downs call for a horse and saddle; it would seem to be the natural way to move over their unrestricted shoulders.

You are in the "white highlands" now, the settled area of Kenya. You may pass pedigree Jersey and Guernsey and Friesian cows, as much at home as on their native European pastures. Co-operative creameries have been established, and from here butter is exported 6,000 miles to England—butter, strangely, produced in tropical and consumed in temperate lands. You may pass, also, fields of what appear to be white daisies. These flowers comprise, in fact, one of Kenya's major crops, pyrethrum, whose flowers are plucked and dried and shipped to Europe and America, there to be used as a base for insecticides like Flit and Keating's powder. The higher the altitude, within limits, the better



A MODERN DAIRY SCENE IN A KIKUYU VILLAGE  
Kenya



pyrethrum thrives Somewhere on these downs you will reach the highest point of your present journey, Mau Summit, over 9,000 feet This is about the loftiest limit of white settlement in Africa

You strike the Rift Valley just where it is widening out to hold Lake Baringo and its low-lying, hot, bushy surroundings Lake Rudolph, at the northern extremity of this desert, is also a part of the Rift, and it is said by some that this great geological fault can be traced northwards through Abyssinia to the Red Sea, the Dead Sea, and the Sea of Jordan To the south-east it narrows to a deep trough, and the Lakes Nakuru, Elmenteita and Naivasha are strung like blue gems along its hollows Nor does it end here, although it becomes less spectacular Geologically it can be traced all the way south to Lake Nyasa where it forks, the part which slashes through the Kenya highlands is the eastern branch The western fork embraces Lake Tanganyika and then a whole chain of lakes running from south to north through Uganda—Kivu, Edward, George, and Albert (It seems a crime that such lovely and exciting lakes should be saddled with such prosaic names) The Rift Valley system is one of the greatest cracks in the earth's surface, extending—if we accept the thesis that the Dead Sea is part of it—for six thousand miles

The road we are following descends into the Rift Valley and proceeds to Nakuru, the "capital of the highlands," a small farmers' town on the edge of Nakuru lake The lake shore is made neither of mud nor of shingle, but of a dazzling, almost blindingly white kind of sand This is soda, deposited from the saline waters of the lake Behind the soda shore is a belt of deep green vegetation, composed mainly of "fever-trees"—Members of a tall, spreading species of acacia To lakeward of the soda shore is another belt of colour, this time it is pink A deep, solid pink, like crushed strawberries and cream And this broad splash of colour encircling the lake is created by the plumage of millions and millions of birds—too many millions to be counted or even guessed They are flamingoes They are a deep pink all over, except under the wings, where they are crimson, so that when they rise it is as if a blood-red cloud suddenly filled the sky They stand shoulder to shoulder in the shallow water making a composite muttering sound, like the murmur of a distant crowd In places I suppose the belt of flamingoes is two or three hundred yards deep The lake itself is a pure blue, and the mountains which rise on the other side are blue and purple, and the sky is filled with grey and violet clouds The whole scene is such a feast of colour that it seems to have a physical impact on the observer, and after a little the eyes ache and the senses grow numb These flamingoes congregate only on soda lakes, feeding on certain types of algae that need salinity for growth There is a danger that they may disappear Lake Nakuru is drying up In the last ten years it has shrunk to a mere puddle of its former self, and now it is nowhere more than a few feet deep There may be consolation in the fact that this has, scientists tell us, happened before Africa has had several pluvial periods, corresponding more or less with our ice ages, when Lake Nakuru was several



FLAMINGOES FEEDING ON LAKE NAKURU  
Kenya

hundred feet deep and was joined, probably, with the other lakes in the Rift to form a gigantic sheet of water. And it has had its arid periods also, when most of the lakes have disappeared. Some people believe that Africa is now experiencing another arid period, and that lakes and rivers will get progressively drier in the years to come.

Beyond Nakuru we turn off the main road and climb the Rift Valley's eastern escarpment, a steep, forest-clad wall. We come out onto rolling uplands again, broken by patches of cedar (as junipers are called) and other forest. Now we are on a wide plateau, a pasture dotted with whistling thorns, lying at an altitude of between 6,000 and 7,000 feet. This is Laikipia, once roamed over by marauding Masai and grazed by countless herds of game. Lions hunted up every gulley, rhino dozed by day in bushy patches, buffalo came out of the hills to graze, and sometimes elephant could be seen wandering from the shelter of one forest to another. Even now there is some game left—wandering herds of zebra and wildebeeste and gazelle, plenty of hartebeeste, a few eland and oryx, now and again. But the big game has gone. Flocks of Merino sheep, for the most part, have replaced it.

On our right, as we cross the plain, rise the forested crests of the Aberdare Mountains, where buffalo and elephant and bongo are still to be found, and among whose marshy peaks the spotted lion is supposed to dwell. Ahead lies an even more imposing sight: the vast bulk of Mount Kenya, dark and massive against the sky, and wreathed in cloud. The mountain (the second

highest in Africa) looms out of the level plain around it in the most uncompromising way, without introductions, it seems, in the way of foothills or spurs. But in fact it has foothills, and you come to them soon. They are made of rich red volcanic soil, as rich as any land in Africa, and here dwell the Kikuyu, an agricultural tribe who have cleared the lower slopes of magnificent forest to make way for their plantations of maize and millet, sorghum, beans and cane.

On the other side of the mountain, to the north and east, you come into some of the loveliest country in all East Africa, country that is gentle and smiling, fertile without the excessive lushness of the tropics. From the glaciers above flow many clear and sparkling streams which freely water the deep earth. The land lies in folds over the core of the mountain, creased by these streams. Once it was all forest, a forest of tall native trees, some of them huge in girth, others with brilliant flowers. And there are fine views all around you—up to the forest that still clothes the mountain and towards the white peak above, down across vivid green pastures, over native plantations and round thatched huts towards the baked plains that lie far away below. This, you may think, is a green and pleasant land indeed. It belongs to natives allied to the Kikuyu, the Meru and Embu tribes.

It is from this eastern side of the mountain that the trail leading to the peak of Kenya begins. You climb first through rain-forest, next through a belt of arched and feathery bamboos, and then you come out on to the bleak moorland, dotted with mountain vegetation—objects like cabbages on sticks, up to fifteen feet high, which are giant groundsel, and tall, furry, monolithic-looking lobelias. As you climb, the grass thins out and disappears, the lobelias, like scattered sentinels, are left behind, and you come to the scree. More climbing—slowly now, for you have reached the thin air, and gasp for breath—and you come to the outposts of the glaciers, somewhere about 15,000 feet. After this your climb becomes a matter of mountaineering, with ice axes and ropes and the rest of the paraphernalia. There are two peaks, Batron and Nelion, Batron, which rises to 17,040 feet, is slightly the higher. The summit is guarded by glaciers of such a formidable nature that after 1899, when the peak was first scaled by Sir Halford Mackinder and his two Swiss guides, they defied all attempts made upon them (and there were many) until 1929, when Shipton and Wyn Harris, of Everest fame, succeeded in reaching the top.

The motor road we have been following winds up and down the steep Kikuyu ridges and leads eventually to Nairobi, the largest city between Johannesburg and Cairo. Near the capital it passes the fringe of the coffee country, a small area producing the bulk of the crop which remains, in spite of many setbacks, Kenya's principal export. Kenya coffee has a world reputation for quality.

It is this coffee land near Nairobi that is at the bottom of the recriminations against Kenya's settlers, to the effect that they have stolen all the best land from the natives. As in many controversies, the dust and heat of the dispute has tended to obscure and distort the facts. It is often assumed that all the

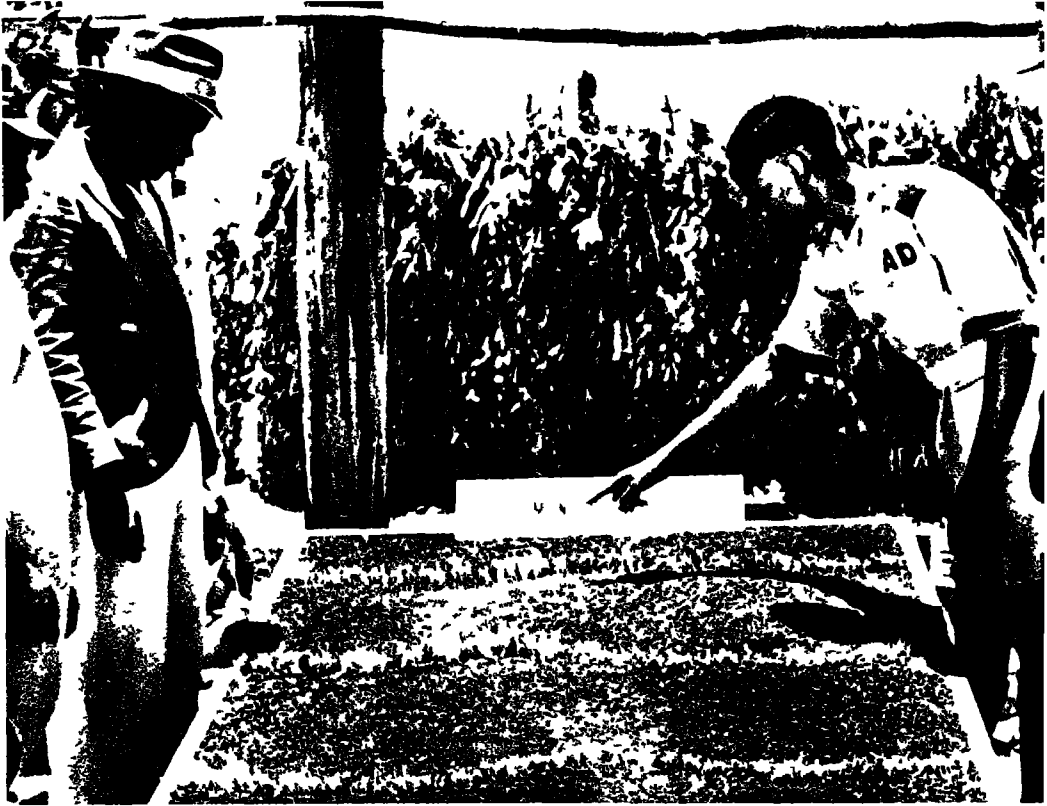


EXHIBIT SHOWING METHOD OF PREVENTING SOIL EROSION  
Kenya

land now in the "white highlands" was once occupied by native cultivators. The greater part of it was, in fact, always pasture, intermittently roamed over by nomad herdsmen and settled by none. A corner of these highlands, the south and south-eastern fringe of Kikuyu territory, has been the subject of the most serious dispute. The trouble arose through ignorance rather than through deliberate injustice. When the Government decided to encourage settlement in 1902, an officer was sent to draw a line between areas occupied by the Kikuyu and the uninhabited land. The intention was to lease to settlers only land not under native occupation. But a smallpox epidemic had recently swept the country and depleted the population. Because of this, land which would otherwise have been in use had reverted to bush. Many uncultivated ridges, bare of villages, really—although this was not known at the time—formed part of a holding to which some family laid claim.

It was not until much of this land had been expensively developed by planters who leased it from the Government that these native claims were advanced. A commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies

in 1933 found, after exhaustive inquiry, that 104 square miles which had been Kikuyu property in 1895, before the smallpox epidemic, had been taken from them, whereas they still occupied 1,500 square miles of their original fertile land, plus more that had been added later. Their reserve—land dedicated to them forever—now amounts to over 1,700 square miles. Native reserves in the Kenya highlands altogether total 48,000 square miles, and land under European occupation 10,000 square miles.

Nairobi has a population of about 40,000 blacks and 6,000 whites. Its origin is humble, it started life as a railway encampment, and its site was chosen because it was the last spot where locomotives could shunt before reaching the hilly uplands. Beginning with canvas, it went on to corrugated iron, and there is a good deal of this ugly material left to-day. But there are also solid and imposing buildings, snowy-white, tiled in red—the railway offices, the law courts, the palatial Government House. Nairobi may ape a thousand other towns with its cocktail parties and its bridge, but if you weary of them you can jump into a car and within twenty miles, if you are lucky, you may be watching a family of lion cubs playing in the sun, or stalking with a camera a group of giraffe. In another direction are the forests of Limuru, where you can picnic by waterfalls in the remnants of that great forest which once stretched from the Aberdares to the town's edge. Nairobi is the seat of Kenya's government, and the commercial capital of East Africa as a whole.

We are now to follow a section of what is called the Great North Road. This route—in parts it is really little more than a track—runs from Nimule on the Upper Nile to Broken Hill in Northern Rhodesia, where it links up with the Rhodesian road system. You can travel by car down the length of Africa, if you wish, to the Cape. From Nairobi it runs south through the Masai reserve and over the Tanganyika border. Your first stop will be Moshi, a small town of German origin, standing on the lower foothills of Kilimanjaro. Here again you must digress to climb the forested spurs of the highest mountain in Africa and to see a little of its beauties, to feel its cool air and to gaze at the white cap far above you, like a snowy cloth spread over a table in the sky. Kilimanjaro, although two thousand feet higher than Kenya, is much easier to climb, for the top is a plateau and not a peak. On the slopes of the mountain are most of the coffee plantations of the territory, native and European. The natives of these parts, the Chagga, had discovered how to irrigate their rich soil from the mountain streams before the Europeans came. Now they have learnt coffee cultivation from the whites, and are among the most prosperous of East African tribes.

It would be foolish to leave this part of Tanganyika without a visit to the Ngorongoro Crater, and beyond it to the Serengeti. From the plain below Mount Meru a road runs westwards and starts to climb what seems to be a series of rolling, bush-clad hills. The climb grows steeper as you go on. The car boils, and grinds its way round hairpin bends. At last you reach a



SANDY RIVER TANGANYIKA

Water colour by Winifred Parsons

*By courtesy of the artist*



THE LONE TREE NEAR NAIROBI KENYA

Water colour by Winifred Parsons

*By courtesy of the artist*

rest camp erected by the Government—a number of solid and comfortable huts, a bathroom and a rough kitchen. Tall, thick-boled podocarpus trees shade the camp, and the grass is lush and long. A few yards from the huts you can stand, it seems, on the edge of the universe. You are, in fact, perched on the rim of a huge crater, sixty or seventy miles across. The sides look almost sheer, and drop for two thousand feet. At the bottom lies a lake, and around it are great herds of game—millions and millions of them, crawling about like ants on the distant crater floor.

Westward of the crater lie the Serengeti Plains, arid and open, inhabited only by game. It is here that the famous lions live. Famous because they have never been shot at and so are remarkably tame, and because they have been as much photographed as all but the most illustrious movie stars. Near the sandy bed of a brackish stream you may find a fine, black-maned old patriarch half asleep under a thorn-tree with a couple of wives dozing beside him. Then you may come upon a family of cubs playing among some boulders. You can hear the lions from your camp at night, grunting and roaring, and very likely you will see them prowling round the tents in the early morning, their heads hung low between their massive shoulders, seeing what manner of strangers have come to invade their country. For it is their country, there is no doubt about that. It is waterless, save for these brackish pools and a few water-holes, and at most seasons the parched grass is as tawny as the lion's coat. Nothing could live here but game, and that flourishes.

To see the rest of Tanganyika we must retrace our wheel-tracks and return to Arusha and the Great North Road. Travelling south there is little to look at but bush as far as Dodoma—broken and rolling country, some of it, but bush nevertheless, with the long, low ranges of hills so typical of Africa. Now, in fact, you feel you are in Africa indeed. It is monotonous country, and you will not see any cattle, for you have entered the land of the tsetse fly. Four-fifths of the whole of Tanganyika is ruled by this insect, ruled so completely that no cattle or horses can live for more than a few weeks. All the efforts of science have failed to find a cure or a preventive for this dreaded disease. No cattle means no transport (other than expensive haulage by lorry), and no ploughs, for oxen cannot be kept to draw them. So the people are condemned to the digging-knife and hoe, and to the age-long habit of turning sufficient land to supply family needs and no—or very little—more. Their children must be raised without milk, their men forgo meat. The chink in the tsetse's armour is that, like many insects, it is not adaptable. It must have just so much shade, live within such-and-such a distance of water, find shelter in certain types of vegetation. If the conditions are not quite to its liking, it moves away in disgust. To exploit this weakness is a colossal job. It means, in effect, re-shaping the country, re-moulding Nature to man's design. Although the task seems almost overwhelming, it has been begun. Large areas of bush have been partially cleared to drive away the fly, and men and cattle brought in to occupy territory thus captured from the enemy. Even



these heroic efforts have barely scratched the surface of the problem. Money to finance and the courage to tackle big things have been sadly lacking in Africa, and on balance it is probable that the tsetse fly is gaining rather than losing ground over the continent as a whole.

From Dodoma we continue southwards to the southern highlands, whose climate is probably as suitable for European settlement as that of the Kenya highlands. You may notice here the same phenomenon that we observed farther north : that in these colder regions the native population thins out until it becomes extremely sparse, or even non-existent. Once again we come upon rambling, thatched farmsteads and herds of cattle and white families, British and German, who are making a living from the African soil. But they are few and scattered. Nothing like so substantial a settlement has been built up as in Kenya. Two hundred miles, roughly the distance from Iringa (the capital of the southern highlands) to the nearest point on the railway at Dodoma, is too long a haul for any crop to stand. The southern highlands are one of the few areas that remains in Africa where white settlement could probably be established on any considerable scale.

From Iringa the Great North Road swings westwards towards Mbeya, and thence to the Northern Rhodesian border. Close to Mbeya (as African distances go) are the goldfields of the Lupa, discovered some ten years ago and now a source of much of the territory's wealth. Gold, in fact, heads the list of Tanganyika's exports in value. On the Lupa you might imagine yourself back in the gold-rush days of California or Australia. Bearded miners in wide-brimmed hats are to be seen, with little bags of gold at their belts; much of the mining is alluvial and you can come upon men panning patiently in river-beds, or washing the dirt in home-made sluices. In the course of time a flourishing mining-camp has grown up, but there is nothing else for hundreds of miles—no town or permanent settlement. The gold goes out by air, but everything else must travel down the long and bumpy road from Dodoma by lorry to reach this bush-encircled spot.

On the boundary separating Northern Rhodesia from Tanganyika we must end our imaginary journey. From the Kenya border we have come nearly seven hundred miles, and well over a thousand from Kisumu on the Lake. We have left huge areas of East Africa unseen: all the deserts of Kenya's Northern Frontier District, for instance, which occupy half the colony's area; all the eight hundred miles of coastline; the great forest gorges, the flowers and the wild life of Ruwenzori; the valleys and volcanoes of western Uganda; the long shores of Lake Tanganyika, once the Arabs' hunting-ground for slaves; and very many places of no less interest. We have caught glimpses of a few native tribes and races, but we have seen only a fraction of the black millions—in Tanganyika alone 119 different tribes have been listed—and little or nothing of how they live and work. In part, this is because space is short; but no book, however lengthy, and no photograph, however clear, could do more than suggest to each reader a different picture of the scene.



A NATIVE GIRL FROM OLD SHINYANGA  
Tanganyika

## CHAPTER IV

EAST Africa is a fascinating part of the world to all sorts of people—to naturalists because of its wonderful variety of game, animals and birds; to sportsmen and painters, to farmers and travellers, to archæologists and botanists and medical men. It is also a great human laboratory for the study of different methods of government and different ways of ordering social life. Here dictatorships in miniature flourish side-by-side with democracies in microcosm. Militarist states live cheek by jowl with peasant communities. Such a state of affairs is, of course, artificial in that a super-state now keeps order among them all. Europeans have been accused of many crimes in Africa, but at least they have abolished the continual inter-tribal warfare which kept Africa in a state of flux and intermittent bloodshed since the beginning of time.

When the white man first got to Africa he found tribes at every stage of social development. The most advanced, as we have seen, were the Baganda,

with their close-knit little kingdom, their chiefs and councils and code of law. In Tanganyika there was another community of the same kind, the "kingdom" of Usambara, between Kilimanjaro and the sea. But these were the exceptions. The tribes around them were far less organised. Some were under the leadership of chiefs who seemed to have great authority, but whose powers were limited by custom and often dependent on all sorts of magical sanctions. Others did not have a chief at all, but were loosely governed by councils of elders whose writ might run only over a ridge or a few villages. Among many tribes the young warriors, forever fighting and raiding, had a good deal to say. Among nearly all, the influence of magic and of medicine-men was very strong. Little could be done without the advice and blessing of these individuals. Sometimes they gained so powerful a hold that the intruding white men mistook them for chiefs. There were tribes acknowledging even less authority than this. Hunters and nomads have little need of government and laws. The order of their going is dictated by nature; when the grass burns, they leave for greener pastures; good rains bring riches, cattle plagues take wealth away.

The first white men had neither the time nor the knowledge to study each individual tribe and fit a form of administration to it, as you might fit a boot to a foot. In those days, anthropology in its modern forms barely existed, the studies on which to-day we can base our native policies simply had not been made. With a few exceptions natives appeared to the white men as naked, ignorant, savage creatures, whose warriors must wet their spears in human blood before they became men, whose elders believed that a lot of mumbo-jumbo with goats' entrails, powdered roots and the hairs of lions would cure disease or bring rain.

Some form of rough administration had to be set up in a hurry. Where a reasonably coherent system of government, headed by a powerful king, already existed, as in Buganda, no attempt was made to disrupt it; on the contrary, a solemn promise was made—and kept—to preserve it intact. But where no such system seemed to exist, white officers were posted to maintain order, dispense justice and collect taxes.

Naturally, these white commissioners could not do all this without help. Where the tribe had a chief, and where the chief was friendly, he was confirmed in his office and entrusted with various jobs according to his capacities. Under him, headmen were appointed in charge of smaller areas or villages. To a large extent the natural leaders of the tribesmen were chosen, but of course it was not possible for the commissioners to delve very deeply into the complicated social customs of the tribes, and sometimes men were appointed who had no authority in native eyes, while the real powers in the land were overlooked. In German territory it was customary to instal as *akidas*, or sultans, men from foreign tribes, generally Swahilis. Some of these *akidas* were intelligent, they were even sent back to Germany to be trained, but of course they had no authority—other than force—among the tribesmen. The idea of discipline rather than of consent inspired the German policy.



WATERING CATTLE AT KAA BONG KARAMOJA  
Uganda

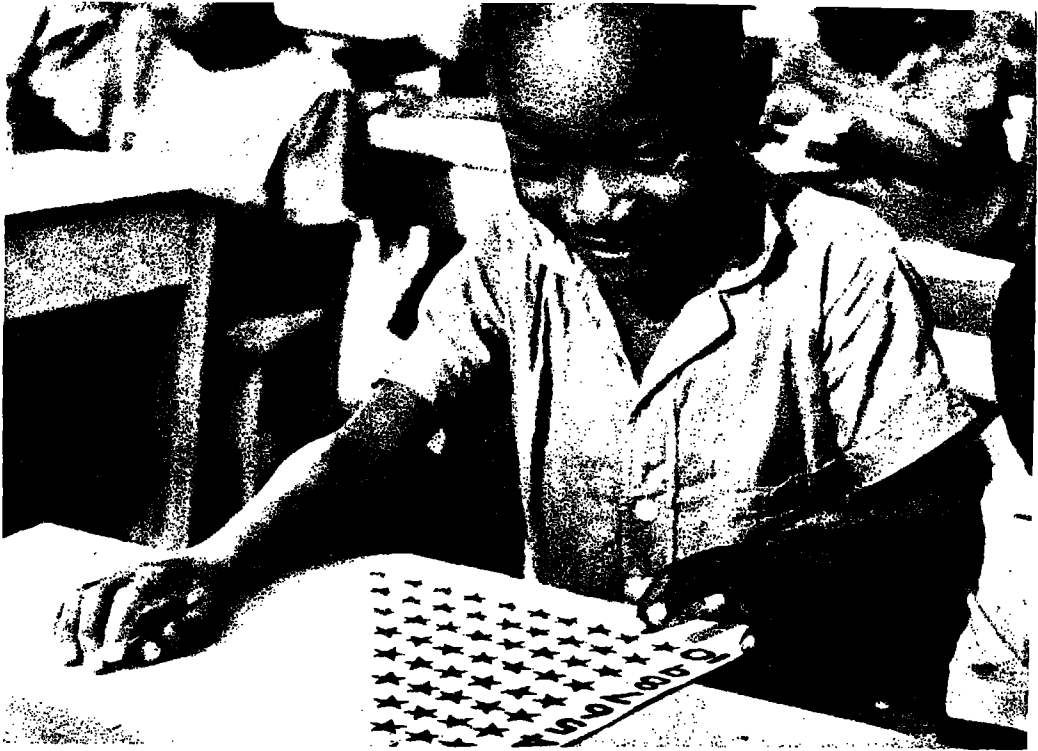
In British territory the system did not work too badly, on the whole. With few exceptions the district commissioners were men with a real interest in the natives, often with a genuine affection for them. They had a high sense of justice, and they tried with honesty and intelligence to do the best they could for their charges. Native law and custom was upheld wherever it was not in direct opposition to English law or "repugnant to morality." For instance, the native custom by which a young man pays a "bride-price" in cattle, goats and beer to the father of the girl of his choice was maintained, and still continues. On the other hand, the custom by which a murderer pays a heavy fine of cattle to his victim's family was set aside in favour of the English system of hanging the offender. (Most of the European's ideas seemed strange and senseless to the African, but few more so than this : of what use was a corpse, they argued, to the family and clan of a murdered man, when they were entitled to cattle which to some extent recompense them for the loss of a valuable warrior or food-producer ?)



BUGANDA CHILDREN AT KAMPALA CHURCH OF ENGLAND MISSION SCHOOL  
Uganda

But it was inevitable that native social systems should to some extent break down and crumble, since chiefs and elders were deprived of many of their vital powers, and youths of their major occupation—making war. Instead, the young men were encouraged to leave their homes to work, either on projects such as roads and railways or on the plantations and farms of Europeans. Here they learnt new habits—to wear clothes, to cut off their warrior's pigtails, to use money. The influence of their elders, the tribal influence, no longer held them. Some learnt the less desirable European customs, such as stealing. Others adopted an easy kind of Christianity from which, too often, the only lesson they seemed thoroughly to absorb was a contempt for their old gods and their old beliefs.

In the early stages of white administration it was hoped to teach the native all the European virtues—to turn him into a hard-working, respectable Christian, a civilised man, having renounced his pagan gods, his insanitary habits and his superstitious beliefs in magic and spells. The spread of Christianity was believed to be the key. Missions sprang up everywhere, and opened schools, government-supported, to teach the children to read and write so that they would be able to study the Gospels.



BUGANDA BOY LEARNING TO COUNT AT KAMPALA MISSION SCHOOL  
Uganda

Then, like a great rent torn in the continuity of European thought and belief, came the war of 1914-18. After it was over, the whole direction of British policy in Africa seemed to change. The African, it was now believed, should not be wrenched from his setting and made to develop along alien European lines. His own institutions, instead of being drastically changed, or destroyed, should be nurtured and strengthened. The aim, as a popular phrase of the time had it, should be to create a good African and not a bad European.

When the mandate for Tanganyika (as "German East" then became) was awarded to Britain by the League of Nations, a set of rules which the British were expected to follow in the administration of the territory were drawn up. These laid down certain definite principles: that the nationals of all states belonging to the League of Nations were to have equal rights and equal treatment; that no discrimination in trade or tariffs was to be shown; that freedom of conscience and religion should be guaranteed; that no fortifications should be built or troops recruited for foreign service; that compulsory labour should be forbidden; and so forth. Above all, the mandate insisted that the rights and interests of the natives should at all times be given first place. The "well-being and development" of the native peoples was defined as the primary aim



LIONS ON THE SERENGETI PLAINS  
Tanganyika

of the administration. The whole conception was that of a beneficent power guiding and training inexperienced native peoples in the direction of self-government.

This idea did not spring ready-made and fully-grown into the world arena. It was the culmination of a trend in British policy that had long been turning towards some such conception. It was one expression of the philosophy of empire that led, in another sphere, to the Statute of Westminster and to the emergence as independent states of the free self-governing Dominions. It was a putting into practice, in one part of Africa, of the twin ideas on which the new British Commonwealth of Nations is built: the ideas of decentralisation and of freedom—freedom for the people of each constituent part to develop along their own lines and to work out their own destiny.

Tanganyika was not the only part of East Africa in which the well-being, development and training in self-government of the natives was to be a leading



HOEY'S FARM NEAR HOEY'S BRIDGE KENYA

Water colour by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester

*By courtesy of the artist*





ABERDARE MOUNTAINS FROM NEAR THOMPSON'S FALLS STATION KENYA

*By courtesy of the artist*

Water colour by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester

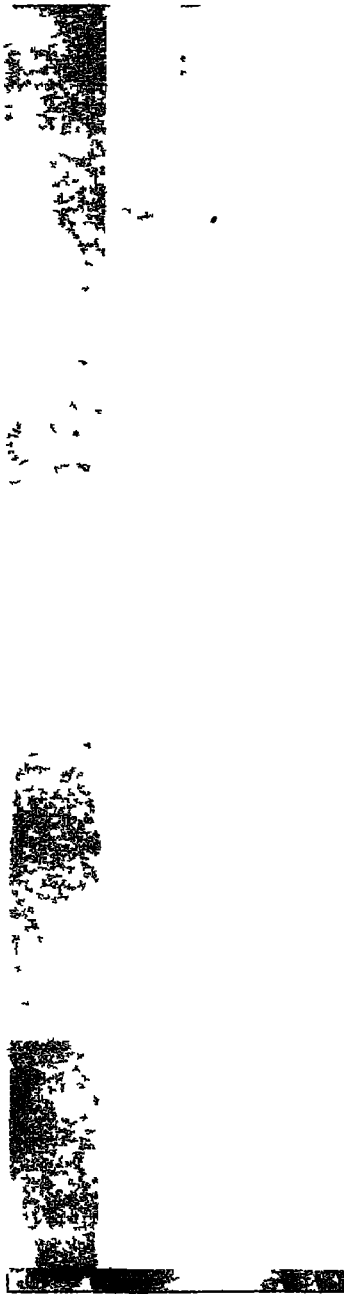
object in British policy. The main principles laid down in the mandate were to be applied in Uganda and Kenya as well. Freedom of conscience, the prohibition of forced labour and of military training for natives existed already, trade discrimination in favour of Britain was forbidden under the Congo Basin Treaties, re-enacted after the war, which secured the "open door" into all the British East African possessions. But now, in the post-war reconstruction, new ideas were developed, notably those known as "trusteeship" and "indirect rule". "Trusteeship" was the name officially given to the native policy of Kenya in 1923, and thereafter extended to cover the whole approach to native affairs in this part of the world. It meant that the natives were in the position of wards to the British, who were to be regarded less as rulers than as trustees. It implied that these countries and their resources were ultimately the property of the indigenous peoples, and must be preserved and developed primarily in the African's interest until such time as the natives themselves were sufficiently trained in the arts of government to take over the job. It marked a final throwing overboard of the old, discredited colonial doctrine that a colony exists for the benefit and enrichment of the colonial power. These colonies—under the doctrine of trusteeship—existed for the benefit and enrichment of the inhabitants, and through them of the whole world.

This hard-worked term "trusteeship" was evolved out of a controversy which centred, between the last war and the depression, about the political structure of Kenya. Since the foundation of a white colony there, Kenya and its future have puzzled and irritated alike those who govern the country, those who live there, and those who merely talk and write about it. Kenya does not quite fit in with its neighbours. In the heart of the colony, a little white island stands up in the midst of a black sea, an island of settlers who do not come and go, as the officials and the traders do, but who live and have their homes in this mountainous patch of tropical Africa. The area they occupy is small—about the size of Wales. They are outnumbered by Africans in the ratio of 150 to 1. But their influence on the country's development and therefore on its destinies has been relatively great. They have never been content to be governed, often ineptly and seldom tactfully, by officials from Downing Street over whose actions they have no control, nor made subject to laws in whose framing they have had no hand. They have demanded what they consider to be the right of a free-born British subject to a say in his own affairs and a voice in his own government. They have asked for a greater measure of self-government, in the sense that their fellow-settlers who went to the British Dominions achieved it. The difficulty is that to grant the settlers of Kenya self-government would also be to grant them the government of three million natives, to whom the British Parliament is pledged as trustee, and who themselves object to the idea. This *impasse* has led to many arguments, projects, blue books and commissions, and like so many other political deadlocks, it is still unresolved.

Trusteeship is a doctrine, its expression takes a form now known as indirect rule. This means, in brief, that the natives are governed, so far as possible, through their existing chiefs and institutions rather than directly by white officials. There is nothing new about it as a principle, but as a system it was not applied in Africa until Sir George Goldie introduced it into Nigeria. It was further developed by his High Commissioner, then Captain Lugard, the army officer who had kept order during the early days in Uganda on behalf of the Chartered Company, and who later became Governor of Nigeria. After the last war the system was transplanted to Tanganyika, where it soon took root. It has a twofold intention: to transfer to the natives as much authority over local affairs as they can exercise without abuse, and to discover and develop the traditional machinery of government which existed, if only in nucleus, before the white man came.

These two intentions are the pillars of indirect rule. In practice, two bits of machinery have been found essential. One is a native treasury and the other a native court. In other words, an authority must exercise a certain independence in spending money and in doing justice, if it is to gain respect. In Tanganyika, the hut and poll tax paid by every able-bodied man is collected by the Native Authorities, who hand some of it over to the central government, but retain a portion to spend on their own projects. (Such matters as schools, roads, agricultural experiments, afforestation and so forth.) They draw up their own budgets, although these have to be sanctioned by the district officers; they pay themselves salaries and employ their own staff. They maintain, also, their own courts of law. They cannot try a man for murder or for other serious offences, or impose penalties of more than a certain weight, but within these limits they hear cases, give judgments, impose fines, and send wrongdoers to jail. Here, again, their records are inspected by white officials, but a good Native Authority will seldom need correction, for the dispensing of law has long been a function of native chiefs and councils, and Africans as a whole have by tradition a keen and lively sense of justice.

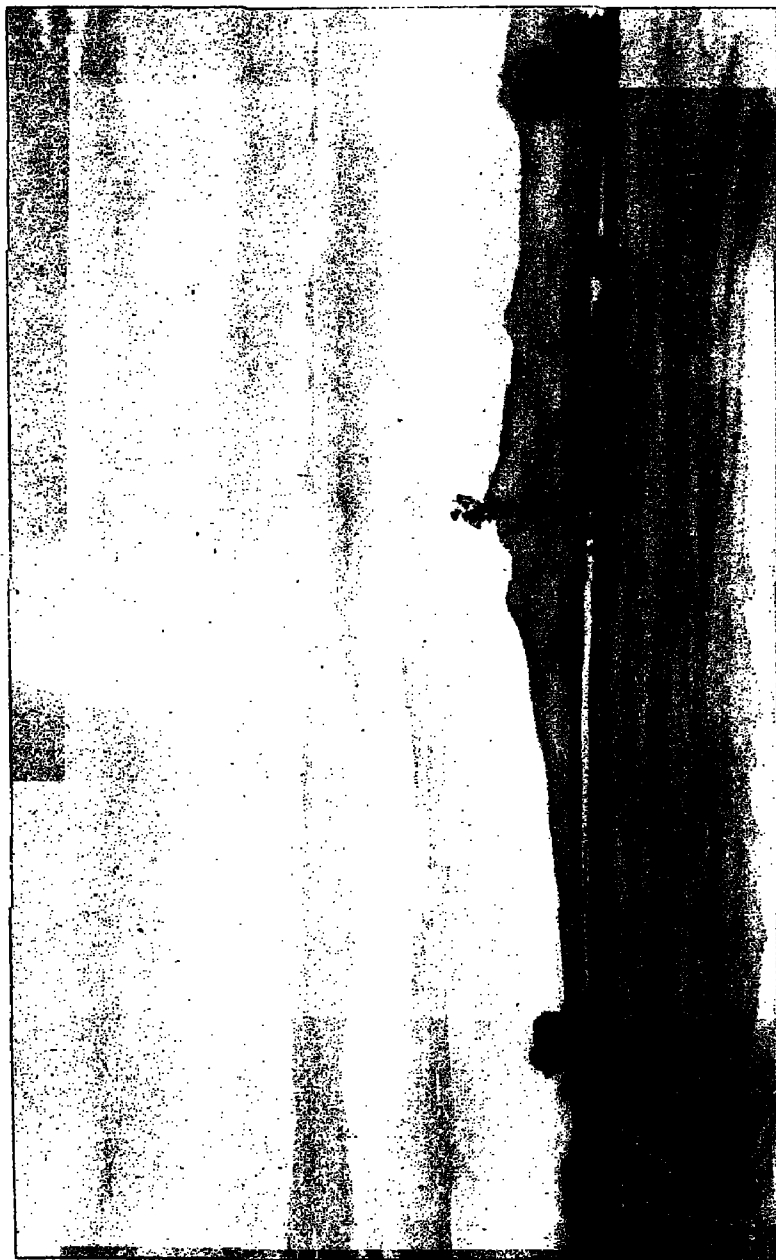
In Kenya, native administration has developed along somewhat different lines. Just as in Tanganyika, the principle of devolution has been applied. Local Native Councils have been set up in all the native areas. These are a mixture of the traditional authorities, the chiefs' and elders' councils of the tribes, with younger men who are selected for their qualities of leadership and ambition. In a sense these councils are more democratic than rule by chiefs, since they find a place for younger men, often educated after a European fashion, who are apt to grow discontented and impatient with the elders' authority. On the other hand, they have no exact counterpart in native tradition, and they cannot draw full strength from the sanctions of the past, or from the semi-mystical respect in which chieftainships were often held. Local Native Councils, like the Native Authorities in Tanganyika, are entrusted with the raising of taxation and the administration of justice to a limited degree.



ABOVE THE GAMI WARDEN'S HOUSE MORU K-FNYA

Water colour by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester

*It contains of the artist*



ABERDARE MOUNTAINS FROM NARO-MORU KENYA  
Water colour by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester

*By courtesy of the artist*

Over every district of all these territories presides the white official, the district officer, the possessor of great powers and great opportunities to guide and shape the destinies of black men and women. He is there to see that order is kept and justice done, regulations obeyed, taxes paid, disputes settled, famine and disease kept at bay. His powers are laid down by law and statute, but no written word can define or circumscribe his duties. His authority rests on his character: on his tact and judgment, his self-reliance and sympathy, and upon his understanding. A man born to the job will become the father of his people, their friend and their master. A misfit will know loneliness and boredom, he will leave behind, at every move, a district full of disputes and grievances.

Above the many districts are the few provinces, each with a senior officer in charge; and above that comes the Governor, at once the King's representative and the chief of the executive, entitled to a fine house and a guard of honour and a title, with an honourable retirement on a handsome pension in front of him. Beyond the Governor looms the Colonial Office in Downing Street, where Governors of all parts of the British Colonial Empire must seek instructions and submit despatches. And beyond, yet again, stands the British Parliament, the ultimate source of all authority. The Secretary of State for the Colonies links the Parliamentary to the civil service machine. Changing with every government, his is the job of translating the will of the British people, as expressed in Parliament, into terms which will affect the lives of the black millions on the shores of Lake Victoria or on the rolling Masai steppes. From its source in Parliament the will of the people flows through him into the dignified and dingy recesses of the Colonial Office; filtered through the civil service machine, it proceeds in handsomely sealed despatches to His Excellency in his tropical but well-appointed Government House; passed through the local Secretariat, it trickles out to the Provincial Commissioner and thence to the District Officer in his tin-roofed office in the bush; and so, one day, it reaches the humble native himself, perhaps in the form of an order issued by his local council or authority, or an announcement made by the District Officer at a public meeting in the market place.

Administration is like a web with many strands uniting and interlocking to form a whole. There is the agricultural strand, represented by an officer whose job is to see that more and better produce is grown in his district without exhausting the soil. He has improved seed to issue, pests to control, marketing to organise, new crops to introduce. Then there is the medical officer, who must run hospitals, ward off epidemics and plagues, preach lessons in elementary hygiene, and combat innumerable diseases—malaria, hookworm, bilharzia, sleeping sickness, leprosy, syphilis, yaws, pneumonia, typhoid and many others. There is the veterinary officer, who must inoculate countless cattle against disease, enforce quarantine restrictions, and endlessly cajole natives to improve their scrubby stock by the selection of bulls and the culling of unproductive animals. There are many others besides, in the government machine: Labour Officers to see that natives who leave their homes to work meet with decent



STUDENT IN THE MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY  
Nairobi, Kenya

conditions and good rations; Game Rangers to protect wild life within the game reserves; Magistrates and Judges to try cases not heard by native courts. The machinery of government in African colonies is to-day a complicated and elaborate affair. The time has come when you must go farther than the lonely bush and elephant-haunted rain-forest, beyond the banks of the Zambesi and the Congo, to find a place where a man is left to his own devices. To all these alien complications the African native himself, if the plan succeeds, will one day be heir. How is he being prepared to shoulder these ever-widening responsibilities? By his association in the work, of course, as we have seen—his member-

ship of native councils and courts, his employment in minor jobs of agriculture and surgery, forestry and clerking. But there is more to it than that. One day he will have to take over the direction and design of the machine, not only to oil the wheels and stand on the assembly line. What is being done to train the native in democracy, above all to produce the leaders he must throw up or perish?

There is by now an educational ladder in Africa, although only a few, as yet, have clambered up its rungs. It starts in the "bush school," a little shed of mud and wattle poles, as a rule, with unglazed windows, rough wooden benches, an earthen floor and—the symbol of learning, the gateway to a new world—a big blackboard. Here come the small, woolly-haired, round-eyed children, to learn from scantily-trained native teachers the elements of the three Rs. Most of these bush schools belong to missions, so that the rudiments of the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Anglican or the Catholic faiths, together with a number of hymns, are absorbed along with the alphabet and the multiplication tables. A government subsidy pays for part of the upkeep of these schools.

From a bush school the successful pupil can pass on to one of the central

schools where teachers with higher qualifications continue the moulding of a primitive little pagan into a literate, English-speaking, Christian-professing young man. Some of these secondary schools are attached to mission stations. Others—an increasing number—are maintained by local native authorities out of their own native budgets, with the help of government grants. These central schools are much more elaborate affairs. They are boarding schools, for one thing; they have well-appointed class-rooms, libraries, dormitories, dining-halls; they have sports and games and teams, and are flavoured with a distinct dash of the English Public School spirit. Some have already achieved local fame. Such,



A CERTIFIED MIDWIFE NAMIREMBE HOSPITAL  
Kenya

for instance, is the school for the sons of chiefs and headmen at Tabora, the "Eton of Tanganyika," where, amid surroundings on which relatively large sums have been lavished, the future leaders of the tribes are given both a general grounding and special training to fit them for their tasks. Another is the Alliance High School near Nairobi, where the cream of Kenya's native intelligentsia, the future teachers, agricultural instructors, government clerks and the like, are taught.

The ladder has one more rung. An outstanding scholar can proceed from one of these central schools to what is destined to become the University of Eastern Africa—Makerere, in Uganda. Started as a technical school, Makerere concentrates mainly on advanced training for certain professions: teaching, medicine, engineering, agriculture and veterinary work. The best part of half a million pounds was voted by the British Parliament and by the East African territories just before the war for the expansion, in fact the reconstitution, of Makerere, on a scale many times as ambitious as before. The work is going forward in spite of the war. Students from Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya and even from Nyasaland, are enrolled in the three-year courses, and those who have been graduated have found good jobs as teachers in secondary schools,



as medical assistants, as instructors in agriculture, as draughtsmen in the railway workshops, and so on.

Our age is notorious for its speed, a quality well illustrated in this matter of African education. In New York, on one occasion, I met a young man from Kenya, of the Kikuyu tribe, who had been graduated from a university in Ohio and was taking an advanced degree at Columbia. He was the student in everything—the American clothes, the idiom, the college pennant tacked to the wall, the leftish politics; even to earning pocket-money by shovelling snow and stoking furnaces. A few years before I had met his father, a chief: a wealthier and shrewder man than most of his fellows, but still of the old school, with many wives clad in sheep's fat, red ochre and goatskins; with herds of goats for a banking account; with numerous children, ears whose lobes had been vastly distended to hold copper ornaments, a liking for day-long feasts off fat-tailed sheep and for beer brewed from sugar-cane. *His father had fought with spear and throwing-club against the Masai, his body painted with lime and ochre, Colobus monkey tails flashing from his ankles. The childhood memories of the young student at Columbia must have been of smoke-filled huts shared with goats, of magic and taboos, of medicine-men who cast out devils with potent powders shaken out of gourds and with the blood and entrails of goats. One generation in this family had spanned all the slow and painful ages lying between primitive superstition and twentieth-century science, between the rain-maker and the Master of Arts. It is doubtful whether, in all history, so abrupt a transformation has ever before taken place. It is doubtful, no less, whether so complete a break with the past, so sudden a plunge into the future, can be made without upsetting the delicate adjustment between a man's mind, his soul, and his environment. Change, many believe, must be more gradual than this if man, however adaptable he may be, is to keep his balance.*

Only one East African in a million, of course, leaves his native shore to face so complete an alienation from his people as that young man who went to Columbia. One of the purposes of Makerere, indeed, is to provide the facilities of a first-rate university in East Africa, so that students do not have to sever themselves from their own environment. Opinions are divided as to the success that can be claimed for this experiment of native education along European lines—for experiment it is, like most of the white man's innovations. Some of the products have shown remarkable intelligence, a sense of responsibility, and qualities of leadership. Others have emerged as discontented, maladjusted individuals, despising the simple manners of their own folk, vainly envious of the motor cars and dinner jackets of the Europeans. It has often been remarked that the first effect of education is to arouse in the African contempt for the land and its pursuits, and no higher ambition than to work in a government office and own a bicycle, or even a car. The problem before the rulers of Africa is to provide a system of liberal education that will produce a greater number of intelligent small-holders and a smaller number of disgruntled clerks.



KANABA GAP UGANDA  
Water colour by Winitred Parson,

*Is courtesy of the artist*



THE ROAD TO MAGADI KENYA

Water colour by Winifred Parson's

Not the least of Africa's fascinations is that it bristles with such unsolved problems and urgent needs. Wherever you go, they stare you in the face. No visitor travels more than a few miles without exclaiming "Why can't they do something about the roads!", and soon other needs appear on every hand—for more hospitals, fewer uneconomic goats, better cattle, crop rotations instead of shifting cultivation, closer settlement in the white areas, irrigation works, control of grass fires, decent conditions in the native quarters of towns, better nutrition, punctual trains, lower railway freights, more malaria control, more research, more afforestation, more secondary industries, fewer locusts, and less female circumcision. Everyone, after even a few weeks in these countries, feels impelled to compile his own list.

The truth is that East Africa is an agricultural region, and not even a rich one at that. The average density of population is less than nineteen to the square mile. There are fertile patches, but there are also vast stretches of barren desert and bush. There is gold, certainly, but not in large quantities; there is no workable oil or coal or iron, and therefore industries cannot take root on any large scale. East Africa must live on what can be produced from the soil, and it must build up the luxuries, perhaps even the decencies, of life gradually out of what can be raised and what can be exported. The limits to the export trade are set not so much by what East Africa can grow as by what can be sold in the outside world, disorganised and contorted for so long by economic and finally by military wars. Many of the things that need doing must therefore be done slowly, or even, for the time being, not done at all.

There is one warning sign, however, that all travellers accustomed to look at countries with observant eyes will see written plainly on the hillsides and on the plains. It is the warning to beware of death, of the death of the soil, which in other countries has been stricken down by the same causes—by the stripping of vegetation which naturally protects it from the naked impact of rain and sun, leaving it exposed and vulnerable to erosion. The impetus to grow more crops is strong, since more crops mean more money coming in, and this means a higher standard of living and a greater surplus for taxation. But in order to plant these crops, forests have been hewn down, bush has been cleared, land has been worked over and over again instead of being given time to rest and recover.

In many places the strain has been too great. Soil has been torn off hillsides and swept down streams by heavy tropical rains. Slopes, fertile and productive ten years ago, are to-day, in places, nothing but a waste of stones. The rich, red earth of Mount Kenya's foothills, for instance, is being washed down the Tana river in such quantities that at times a brown stain discolours the blue Indian Ocean fifty miles out to sea. On the heels of this reckless despoiling have followed the familiar symptoms—falling crop yields, deep gullies carving into cultivated fields, rivers that race down in dangerous flood when it rains and shrivel to nothing in the dry season. Down on the plains, cattle which would naturally perish from disease, but which science has kept alive,

trample and graze to destruction over-crowded pastures. There are areas overstocked three and four times their capacity for supporting the herds. The natives, bound to their beasts by tradition and economics—wealth is still reckoned in cattle and goats—refuse to sell the surplus, or to cull their herds. So new dust bowls are being created, just as they have been formed in the United States and Canada. New belts of fertile land are being impoverished, as they have been in the cotton belt of America, in China, in the Mediterranean states. The foundations of new problems are being laid—problems of poverty, of run-down soil, of over-population, of dwindling water, and perhaps of dust bowl refugees.

It is difficult not to feel that this is the greatest problem facing Africa to-day—how to preserve for the use of future generations the only real resource that Africa possesses, its good earth. Allied with it are many others: of whether the African can successfully blend his inheritance and traditions with the new western ideas that have poured in on him so quickly and so roughly; of whether the tribal bonds that Europeans have broken can be replaced by a new discipline of the African's own making before a state of spiritual anarchy intervenes. The future is studded with question marks in Africa, as it is elsewhere. But there is a difference which is all in Africa's favour. There, in this sunlit, happy, and easy-going land, you seem to stand at the beginning of history. The African people have emerged from an age-long anonymity, awoken from a sleep of centuries. For the first time they stand on the edge of great events, conscious of themselves and of the surrounding world. Whatever happens to Europe, things can never be the same for them; they must go forward, whether to greatness or to chaos no man can say, but towards experiment. And, from a Europe where everything seems already to have been tried and failed, torn again by the old dissensions that will not die, the way that they will tread, although nobody can mark its course or measure its abysses, seems at least to be a path of hope.

